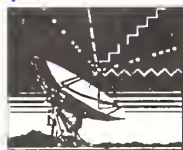


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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

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Letter No. 2704

March 10, 1995

FIGHTING FOOD STAMP FRAUD -- USDA is launching a three-part plan to combat fraud in the \$27 billion food stamp program. Acting Agriculture Secretary Richard Rominger says the proposal is the result of a collaborative effort between the Department's Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, which oversees the program, and the USDA's Office of Inspector General, which is responsible for investigating program violations. The comprehensive three-tier attack on trafficking involves pre-authorization screening, post-authorization controls and stiffer penalties. **Contact: Neal Flieger (703) 305-2039.**

BUDGET CUTS TARGET RURAL HOUSING -- A Congressional rescission proposal, targeting \$240 million in USDA programs, includes a \$115.5 million cut in rural housing. The Rural Rental Housing Direct Loan Program, called the 515 Program, is the largest federal rental housing program in rural America. Currently, more than \$1.5 billion in eligible applications are waiting for approval. **Contact: Steve Hart (202) 720-6903.**

BUDGET CUTS TARGET WIC -- A Congressional proposal, targeting \$240 million in USDA rescissions, includes a \$25 million cut in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). If approved, that would mean a cut of nearly 50,000 recipients from the program. More than 6.4 million people receive WIC benefits each month. WIC is expected to serve 7.2 million people per month in 1995. **Contact: Neal Flieger (703) 305-2039.**

\$44 MILLION RETURNED TO PRODUCERS -- Members of the U.S. produce industry received nearly \$44 million in reparation awards last year under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA). Nearly 4,000 complaints about unfair trading practices were filed under PACA by members of the produce industry. More than 70 percent of these complaints were settled through informal arbitration. The purpose of PACA is to reduce the vulnerability of fruit and vegetable producers to unfair trading practices due to the perishability of their products. Over the past decade, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has handled nearly 40,000 PACA complaints, a steady rise from 2,596 complaints valued at \$15 million in 1984 to 3,733 complaints valued at \$44 million in 1994. **Contact: Connie Crunkleton (202) 720-8998.**

NO EXTENSION ON COTTON LOANS -- Loan extensions will not be available on outstanding Commodity Credit Corporation's nonrecourse upland cotton price support loans maturing on March 31, 1995. Upland cotton loans mature 10 months from the first day of the month in which the loan is made. Producers may request an 8-month extension if the average price for upland cotton in designated spot markets for the preceding month doesn't exceed 130 percent of the average price for the past 36 months. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR POULTRY VIRUS -- USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is increasing disease surveillance activities to protect the U.S. poultry industry from the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus present in commercial poultry flocks in Mexico. USDA will increase slaughter and farm disease surveillance activities for poultry in states bordering Mexico and other areas of the U.S. which might be at risk due to movement of equipment, personnel or waterfowl. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.**

CHICKEN WATER -- USDA will now monitor and evaluate in-plant trials of the use of the antimicrobial compound chlorine dioxide in poultry processing water. The Food and Drug Administration approved (March 3) the compound as a food additive for such purposes. Associate Administrator Thomas J. Billy of Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) said, "FDA's approval of chlorine dioxide clears the way for the FSIS to work with companies wishing to conduct in-plant trial tests of the compound to determine the efficiency and safety of this new technology under approved conditions of use." In-plant trials are the next step to provide the basis to evaluate the utility of chlorine dioxide under commercial conditions. **Contact: Jacqu Knight (202) 720-9113.**

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CORN -- USDA is asking the public for comments on a petition for a determination of nonregulated status for "Event 176 Corn" that is genetically engineered for insect resistance. Ciba Seeds, a division of Ciba-Geigy Corporation, has asked to produce its genetically engineered corn without securing further USDA permits or acknowledged notifications. The corn is currently regulated because it is genetically engineered with a synthetic gene that codes for an insecticidal protein. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 734-5931.**

SPAIN FREE OF HORSE SICKNESS -- USDA has declared Spain free of African horse sickness. This reduces the quarantine requirements for imported horses and removes Spain from USDA's list of countries where African horse sickness is known to exist. USDA importation requirements for horses are stringent to prevent this exotic disease from being introduced into the U.S. horse population. USDA made the decision after evaluating information provided by Spanish animal health officials and visiting their facilities. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.**

GROUND TURKEY RECALLED -- Hudson Foods of Springfield, Missouri, is implementing a voluntary recall of one pound and ten pound packages of ground turkey. Small pieces of bones were found in the product "Delightful Farms Finely Ground Turkey" distributed to retail food stores in the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. All packages covered under the recall will have "Est. P-7249" inside the circular USDA inspection seal on the label. USDA learned of the problem after two consumers in Minnesota reported finding bone in the ground turkey. No other Delightful Farms food product is affected by the recall. **Contact: Stephen Lombardi (202) 720-9113.**

FAX -- For radio and TV programming information and the **Broadcasters Letter** through your facsimile machine, call USDA's AgNewsFax. Use the telephone connected to your FAX machine to call **(202) 690-3944**. At voice prompts press **1**, press **4**, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newslines information, press **9250**; TV contents billboard, press **9260**; TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press **#**, press **3**, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1971 -- In this week's edition of Agriculture USA, John Snyder takes a look at a new nationwide study on Integrated Pest Management. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1451 -- Minerals and your health; strawberries are a "berry" big success story; copper deficiency and your health; food and drug intervention; sticky semolina. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1962 -- Drought in the forecast for the Southeast; controlling potato sprouts; a new way to keep track of pesticide use; dairy cow dietary analysis; crop reporting dates; producers help produce this survey. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE. Monday, March 20, ag outlook. Tuesday, March 21, chemical usage; weekly weather and crops. Thursday, March 23, catfish processing; livestock, dairy and poultry. Friday, March 24, livestock slaughter; trade update. Tuesday, March 28, weekly weather and crops. Thursday, March 30, ag prices; tobacco world markets and trade. Friday, March 31, grain stocks; rice stocks; prospective planting; hogs and pigs; livestock and poultry markets and trade. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Eric Parsons reports on crop reporting dates.

ACTUALITIES -- Includes excerpts from Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger's speech to the National Farmers Union, highlights from Soil & Water Conservation Society's press conference and USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop conditions.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-Band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.

Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

"TALL" TEXANS...are young adults, 25-40 years of age, chosen for a two-year curriculum of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program. **Roddy Peeples** (Voice of Southwest Agriculture Network, San Angelo, TX) has served on TALL's advisory council since the program began several years ago. **Rene Stewart** of Roddy's network team is a participant. She was in California last week for one of several 3-day visits scheduled during the program. Rene will have a week-long session in Washington and an overseas visit before completing the course. Former Texas Governor **Dolph Briscoe, Jr.**, who established TALL, was recipient this week of the Distinguished Texan in Agriculture Award given by Texas A&M University's College of Agricultural Sciences.

USDA BROADCASTER RETIRES...after more than 30 years' service. **Will Pemble**, broadcaster, producer and writer for our Agricultural Research Service, retired March 3. Will produced ARS video news releases for more than 20 years and previously served as host/producer for USDA TV programs, *Across the Fence* and *Down to Earth*. More than 100 friends and colleagues attended his farewell last week at Beltsville, MD. **Hubert Kelly**, retired Director of ARS Information, hosted the celebration. **Robert Norton**, current Director of ARS Information, highlighted Will's talents as did other colleagues. **Dr. K. D. Murrell** spoke for the many scientists that Will assisted over the years. We promoted him to the first-ever title of *Producer Emeritus* with our Center.

SENSE OF HUMOR...do you have one? Veteran broadcaster **Bob Brown** (WLBK/WDEK, DeKalb, IL) entertains audiences with talks about importance of humor (when he's not busy broadcasting). At 76 years young, Bob began broadcasting in 1947 as a news director and after several different roles began farm broadcasting in 1967. Today, he is on-the-air just over two hours a day with primary program times of 5:45-6 a.m. and 12-1:00 p.m. Winter's not over in Illinois. Bob reported freezing rain and snow of 1-3 inches this week. A favorite topic among farmers there is whether and/or how much farm program budgets should be cut.

Larry A. Quinn

LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center



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